



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For Information Contact Public Affairs
PATRICK SCHNEIDER
Telephone: (602) 514-7547
Pager: (602) 356-0207

HATE CRIME RESULTS IN LIFE SENTENCE

PHOENIX, ARIZONA –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on January 27, 2003, Aaronray James Miguel, date of birth August 24, 1976, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced to life imprisonment, by United States District Court Judge James A. Teilborg, in Phoenix, Arizona.

On October 31, 2000, defendant Aaronray James Miguel and co-defendant Dorian Brown brutally murdered Justin "Pete" Enos on the Gila River Indian Reservation. The motive for the crime was the victim's sexual orientation. While at a Halloween party, the victim was lured outside and severely beaten. He was then dragged to another location where his legs were bound by a rope. He was then tied to a horse and dragged several hundred feet to his eventual grave site. A hole was dug before defendant Miguel finished the victim off by repeatedly striking the victim with a shovel on his face and neck. The defendant's sentence was enhanced since the jury made a specific finding that the crime was motivated at least in substantial part because of the victim's perceived or actual sexual orientation.

Defendant Miguel had been found guilty by a jury on October 2, 2002, of Second Degree Murder.

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Defendant Miguel received a number of enhancements in addition to the jury's specific finding, including physical restraint of the victim, obstruction of justice for threatening two witnesses, and instructing a juvenile male to get a horse. The defendant also was found to be a career criminal since he had two prior violent felony convictions. The defendant repeatedly interrupted the Judge during sentencing, showed no remorse for his actions, and had to be physically restrained by the U.S. Marshals after sentencing.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Gila River Tribal Police Department.

The prosecution was handled by Michael W. Kemp and Mary Beth Phillips, Assistant United States Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-00-1198-PHX-JAT
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